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ABSTRACT

This paper presents arguments and evidence from research and practice in support of a series of statements concerning inclusion of students with disabilities as a force for school renewal and the building of the school community. The statements are: (1) inclusion heightens awareness of the school as community; (2) inclusion is a cultural force for school renewal; (3) for inclusion to thrive, schools must be conscious communities; (4) learning to build community means linking person-to-person learning to social architecture; (5) building community is creative work; (6) education is the way of becoming a human being; (7) commands are futile as a way to better education; and (8) building inclusive community links schooling with education. (Contains 35 references.) (DB)

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INCLUSION AS A FORCE FOR SCHOOL RENEWAL

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Inclusion as a Force for School Renewal

John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien

Inclusion heightens awareness of the school as community

Including students with substantial disabilities in regular classrooms heightens awareness of each interrelated aspect of the school's life as a community: its boundaries, its benefits to members, its internal relationships, its relationships with its outside environment, and its history (Taylor, 1992). As most people who have faced the possibility of inclusion know viscerally, this heightened awareness usually comes in the form of fear and defense, expressed in terms that sound similar from either side of the boundary that separates students on the basis of disability. We could imagine either a special educator or a general educator saying,

> "Students like that have always been educated with others like themselves. Both they and their teachers work in fundamentally different ways than we do, and, what's more, their teachers have different affiliations, different sources of funds, and different accountabilities than we do. Having those students here with us will distract us from our real purpose and disrupt our routines. Besides, we don't know how to teach students like that. Both groups of students will be disadvantaged; those student's parents would never allow it to happen and neither would our students' parents."

The art of facilitating inclusion involves working creatively with this state of heightened awareness to redirect the energy bound-up in fear toward the kind of problem solving that promotes reconsideration of boundaries, relationships, structures, and benefits. When redirection fails, students with disabilities remain on the outside, or they drift with their IEP's and their aides in the way Schnorr (1990) describes in "Peter? He comes and goes...". When this redirection succeeds, as it has for Katie (Logan, et al., 1994), the life of a classroom shifts, in surprisingly quiet ways, to make room for new relationships, new structures, and

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new learning. Here are some of the contrasts between Peter's and Katie's experience of first grade.

	Peter	Katie
Boundaries	Joins a class of 23 students for one period in the morning and during "specials" period after lunch for art, music, PE, & library "He's not in our class.....He comes in the morning when we have seat work. Then he leaves to go back to his room." (p. 235)	Full time member of regular class of 22 students. "I like Katie bekos I like to pla weth her. I like to help her weth her work. I like to count weth her...." (p. 43) (Quotations are from student letters to Present Clinton, advocating inclusion for Anastasia Somoza, an excluded child in New York City whose sister publicly appealed to the President for help.)
Adult Relation-ships	Regular class teacher has no instructional responsibility; Peter brings his work with him. Peter comes to art & music with two other special ed students and a special ed teaching assistant.	Regular class teacher has instructional responsibility, with assistance in designing instruction and 2 hours daily support from special educator or teaching assistant, who acts as a co-teacher for the whole class.
Structures	During the time Peter is with them, other students work at their seats on individual worksheets ."We do math and he colors." (p. 236) Peter leaves art, music, PE and library 15 minutes before other students	Cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring, buddy system. Learning activities adapted, to promote inter-action e.g. Katie picks out 2 flash-cards (learning to count); her partner adds the numerals and states their sum (learning to add).
Benefits	Goals for Peter in the regular classroom are all "social" (despite the fact that activities during his time there are either done individually or conducted in a sub-group of special students)	Goals for all children are cognitive and developmental. An interdisciplinary unit on "How can I make a change in my community" focused on disability issues including accessibility and inclusion. "...Me and Katie like to rede together. She holds the other side of the book and repete after me...." (p. 43)

Differences between the two children do not explain the difference in their experiences –in fact, as described, Katie's disabilities are greater than Peter's. What makes the difference is the guiding idea that directs the behavior of the adults involved with the two children. Peter receives a professionally prescribed dose of mainstreaming as a part of his special education; whatever his experience of it may be, he is only visiting his schoolmates in their classroom, whose boundaries, relationships and structures are, by adult design, minimally influenced by his presence. Katie belongs to her class, and, because special educators and regular educators collaborate to give educational meaning to her membership, the adaptations her presence stimulates benefit her, her classmates, and her teachers.

Inclusion is a cultural force for school renewal

The students, parents, teachers, and administrators who actively engage in the day-to-day renegotiation of school boundaries, relationships, and structures in order to include students with substantial disabilities represent a powerful cultural force for school renewal, a force of the sort that Michael Fullan (1993), a long time student of change in schools, described in this hypothesis,

> ... In most restructuring reforms new structures are supposed to result in new behaviors and cultures, but mostly fail to do so. There is no doubt a reciprocal relationship between structural and cultural change, but it is much more powerful when teachers and administrators begin working in new ways only to discover that school structures are ill-fitted to the new orientations and must be altered.... (p. 68)

On this understanding, positive effects of inclusion on school renewal come only when the people engaged 1) notice discrepancies between what they want to do and what current boundaries, relationships, and structures allow and 2) adapt those boundaries, relationships, and structures to make their next steps possible. For example, most teachers and administrators working for inclusion notice that their work calls for a far more collaborative relationship between special education teachers and regular education teachers than existing structures can support. As they work to build better collaboration, they can find themselves reconsidering the history that has separated them, renegotiating the physical and time boundaries of the classroom, reallocating responsibilities, and finding new ways to share the benefits of working collaboratively. In turn, this can lead them to negotiate for changes in job descriptions, supervisory arrangements, and conditions of employment.

Inclusion's potential for school renewal is easily blunted. Involved people can breath a sigh of relief when a student with a disability simply manages to be present in class without precipitating any of the anticipated disasters, and then raise no further questions about the school's practice. The weight of a school's history –customary labor demarcations, jealousies over resource allocation, rivalries for control, habitual animosities, cynicism, overcommitment to too many reform programs at once– can overwhelm the school's capacity to adapt to the possibilities raised by the practice of inclusion. Ironically, people may be distracted from the sustained work of reshaping boundaries, relationships, and structures by the growing visibility of inclusion as a concept: administrative directives may impose inclusion as an attempted structural change, thus reversing the less dramatic but potentially more powerful process of accumulating cultural shifts leading to adaptations in structure, and thereby increasing the chances that inclusion will join the long list of " disappointing reforms we tried in the '90's"; practitioners eager to reflect best practice may just relabel current activities as "inclusion" rather than transforming their practice; and, contending interest groups may raise inclusion as a banner or as a target in their campaigns on other school related issues.

For inclusion to thrive, schools must be conscious communities

Sergiovanni (1994) described the importance of community to schooling this way:

> …Community is the tie that binds students and teachers together in special ways, to something more significant than themselves: shared values and ideals. It lifts both teachers and students to higher levels of self-understanding, commitment and performance – beyond the reaches of the shortcomings and difficulties they face in their everyday lives. Community can help teachers and students be transformed from a collection of "I's" to a collective "we", thus providing them with a unique sense of identity, belonging, and place. (p. xiii)

Absent this sense of community, Sergiovanni argued, efforts to achieve superior academic results or even to maintain discipline are fundamentally hindered. People who make up a school that strives for belonging, mutual caring, and commitment to work hard with common purpose have far stronger foundations for their academic work than those who understand their school as a mechanistic organization and treat one another, and the school itself, as though teachers and students were (or ought to be) interchangeable, unfeeling parts that either mesh properly

or get junked.

If it is to be achieved at all, community in school must be conscious. Building community requires thoughtful and sustained work to respond to at least three influential social trends that are beyond the school's control. First, most public schools bring together students and staff from diverse backgrounds and circumstances; and often, inter-group conflicts –unsolved outside school because no effective civic mechanisms support resolution– create chronic tensions, which occasionally erupt and shatter the uneasy truces that allow everyday school life. Second, more and more children and their families have to discover how to create a decent, satisfying life in the face of many powerful forces that strain family and neighborhood ties (this is as true of teachers and their families as it is of any other family) (Martin, J., 1992). Third, there is a growing number of children and adults who don't defer to authority without question; they expect to be sold rather than told, and without a negotiated sense of shared purpose, they expect to be sold on narrow terms: "What's in it for me, right now?"

No one who is actually working to build community will confuse community with utopia. Communities can stratify themselves and justify terrible inequalities in access to resources. Community members can shame and bully one another into claustrophobically narrow roles. Communities can feed their sense of unity with hatred of difference, with manipulated fear of enemies, and with scapegoating. Guiding a school's development is not about invoking community as a magic word. It is about struggling courageously and thoughtfully together for respectful relationships, equality of opportunity for individual initiative, mutual support with life's troubles, ways to share and celebrate each member's unique gifts, just ways to deal with conflicts, and powerful ways to confront threats with integrity. Building community is a helpful guiding idea for a school because it can provide a way to understand these fundamentally human issues in a way that organizes sustained action.

The full promise of inclusion lies in the kind of school community that can grow as students with substantial disabilities raise awareness of unspoken dimensions of school life and provide opportunities for everyone who shares that life to learn more rewarding ways to be together. Students with substantial disabilities are, of course, neither the only teachers of these lessons of community nor are they the only beneficiaries of schools that are willing to learn from them. Students with academic and artistic gifts also can teach a great deal about the costs of separating and grouping children on the basis of a single

dimension of their lives and about the benefits of carefully building community (Sapon-Shevin, M., 1994); so can the many students pushed to the margins of school life by the consequences of poverty, racism, sexism, and differences in learning style –consequences all too often exacerbated by the many separate programs intended to remediate them (Wang, Reynolds, Walberg, 1994). Teachers who feel the lack of collegiality and mutual support and regret being treated as poorly milled parts of a malfunctioning machine can be eloquent in expressing the importance of a sense of community in their work (Sarason, 1990).

But students with substantial disabilities can make a particular contribution to building community in school exactly because their ordinary presence in regular classrooms, vocational education programs, and student activities has been, to most people, unthinkable. If regular school can be a place where students can successfully learn together despite obvious and extreme differences in ability, it must be a very different sort of place than many people have thought; perhaps a place with different resources and different possibilities than most approaches to reforming schools have accounted.

Three themes recur in reflection on observation of classrooms working thoughtfully to include students with substantial disabilities, and in listening to the students and teachers involved reflect on their experience (O'Brien, C. 1994; O'Brien, J., 1993; 1992). One, adults make a bigger deal of inclusion than students do, both in the sense that they fear greater problems and that they are more excited by the outcomes. Many students are puzzled when adults from other districts visit to see them doing everyday things alongside students with disabilities. Two, while some students are indifferent and a few say that they would prefer not to have classmates with substantial disabilities, a significant number of students report enjoying the investment of their time and energy in getting to know, doing things with, and helping students with substantial disabilities. Three, contrary to common and persistent worries, the presence of students with substantial disabilities does not seems to result in declines in overall student achievement. In fact, the impression that students with substantial disabilities make a positive difference to achievement is common, though only occasionally have schools supported this impression with more systematic study (Cooper, 1993).

Among the benefits that involved students from kindergarten to high school commonly report from being members of inclusive classrooms are: discovering commonalties with people who look and act very differently on the surface; taking pride in helping someone who seems less able to make important gains; having officially sanctioned opportu-

nities to care (usually, after the primary grades, in the sense of actively caring for someone, rather than physically taking care of them); acting consistently with important values, such as promoting equality, overcoming segregation or sticking up for someone who is treated in prejudiced ways; developing skills in collaborative problem solving, in communication, in instruction, and in providing personal assistance; and learning directly about difficult things, including overcoming fear of difference; problem solving around classroom relationship problems; dealing with difficult –even violent or self-injurious– behavior (which professionals not only couldn't explain fully but also enlisted student help in understanding); dealing with the effects of family issues on their classmate's life, and facing and supporting one another through the serious illness, and sometimes the death, of someone their own age.

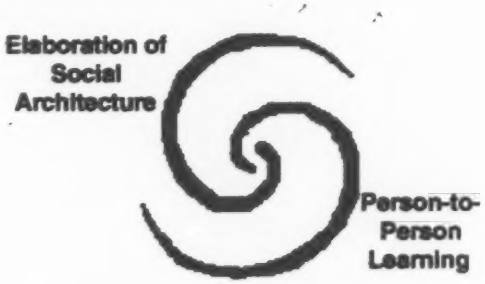
These are not, of course, ideal relationships. The student with a disability sometimes can seem more like a class project than a full and equal class member. Not only are students with a disability's relationships as volatile, and occasionally painful, as those of students who are not disabled, some students who are very actively involved can seem quasi-professional or maternalistic (many more girls and young women appear to be involved in close relationships with disabled students of both sexes than boys and young men are). And, a number of parents of older students say that their hopes for close, equal, and enduring friendships that extend richly and spontaneously into life after 3:00 PM faded as their child's classmates began to date and drive and take up after school jobs.

Even given these signs of how much farther we have to travel on the way to schools where students have full and equal relationships regardless of disability, one can't watch students in classrooms where inclusion is happening without being deeply impressed that many students act capably and resourcefully in situations that many adults find daunting. What seems most important is that teachers encourage students to face real problems in the common life of their classrooms, with the clear expectation that they will make a significant contribution to figuring out what to do and doing it.

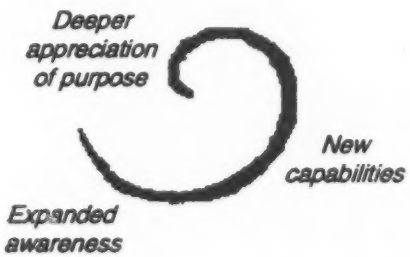
The guiding idea of building conscious community offers the best direction finder for the work of deepening and strengthening students as resources in one another's education. Embracing this guiding idea does not debase academic work or vocational preparation; it simply recognizes that without continual effort to build a context of respectful relationships and caring about people, ideas, and things, progress on academic and vocational fundamentals will be very limited indeed (Noddings,1992).

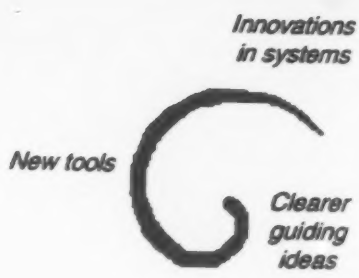
Learning to build community means linking person-to-person learning to social architecture

The image of building community implies a way do it. Conscious community develops when people thoughtfully relate cycles of person-to-person learning to the elaboration of a social architecture that expresses and supports that learning (see American Management Association, 1994 and Senge, 1994 for helpful discussions of the work of a learning organization. We adapt some of senge's defintions in the images of the cycles of learning and social architecture below).



The person-to-person learning cycle relates expanded awareness, new personal skills and capabilities, and a deeper sense of purpose. When teachers who are anxious about including students with substantial disabilities name their fears of inadequacy in teaching them, awareness can expand, making room for the development of new capabilities in designing instruction or dealing constructively with differences or whatever the fear may point to. As discussion, problem solving, and practice expand capabilities, teachers can come to see their classrooms and their teaching in new ways that deepen their appreciation of the purpose of their work. In turn, a deeper sense of purpose can set the scene for further expansion of awareness and further development of capability.





In competent school communities, person-to-person learning shapes the social architecture –the boundaries, relationships, and structures that organize space, time, talents, and money to do the school's work. Through planning with and for the whole school, shared exploration of a deepened sense of personal purpose can clarify the guiding ideas that organize the school's daily life. Through systematic reflection on effective practice, new capabilities can take form in new tools and procedures that disseminate their effects. Through day-to-day problem solving and conflict resolution, expanding awareness can adapt the school's systems to make the work people want to do easier. This table includes some examples of tools and innovations in systems that have developed from the concern to include children with substantial disabilities.

Guiding Idea
The school is a place where…
…all are welcome to contribute to the work of the school
…each belongs as a valued member
…all students and adults support one another as active learners

Tools	Systems
MAPS (O'Brien & Forest, 1989) – a way to engage students, parents, and teachers in developing a shared understanding of a student and a common vision of that student as an active learner who enjoys the benefits of class membership and contributes his or her gifts to other members of the class.	**Cooperative Learning** (Johnson, R. & Johnson, D., 1994; Sapon -Shevin, Ayres, & Duncan, 1994) – structures 1) interdependent performance on common curricular tasks; 2) individual accountability for achieving instructional objectives and personal responsibility for contributing to group effectiveness; 3) purposeful face-to-face cooperation in small groups; 4) the systematic development of interpersonal and group skills; and, 5) continual improvement of learning group functioning through systematic evaluation.
CPS (Giangreco, Cloninger, Dennis, & Edelman, 1994) – a systematic approach to creative problem solving which taps student and teacher creativity by orchestrating divergent and convergent thinking to specify 1) objectives, 2) relevant facts, 3) effective problem definition, 4) potential ideas for solution, 5) good solutions, and 6) acceptance of a plan of action.	**Circles of Friends** (Pearpoint & Forest, 1993) – a social form for inviting and sustaining people's expression of their care for one another through the exchange of practical help, problem solving, advice, and personal support in day-to-day activities of interest to circle members.
Membership Stories (Ferguson, 1994) – a way to guide reflection and learning about the ways in which groups of students create shared definitions that incorporate students with disabilities and the ways in which groups of students include one another in shared activity.	**Partner Learning** (Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 1994, Section II) structures student-student partnerships in which one student exercises responsibility for assisting another student's learning through coaching academic learning, mentoring participation in school activities, or mediating the resolution of conflicts.
PATH (Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1993) – a way to organize people with diverse points of view and differing gifts to search for explicit and scheduled patterns of shared action that will move them toward a shared vision in the service of common values.	**Inclusion Facilitators** (Tashie, et al., 1993) – redefining the job of the special education teacher as a collaborator with all teachers, related service providers, and parents whose mission is "to facilitate, however necessary, the full inclusion of students who have disabilities as active, participating learners in regular age-appropriate classes and neighborhood schools." (p. 7)

In turn, shifts in social architecture can stimulate person-to-person learning. Public commitment to the guiding idea of building a conscious community which includes students with substantial disabilities can generate important questions and conflicts among teachers and students. These questions can create occasions to expand awareness and clarify personal purpose. Opportunities to learn to use tools, such as MAPS or Membership Stories, can provide occasions for expanded capability. Innovations in systems, such as the adoption of collaborative learning approaches, or the redefinition of the role of special educators as collaborating teachers, can provide the context for creating new tools and a new sense of shared purpose.

This vignette, written by Diane Rankin (1994), provides a glimpse of the way tools and systems have developed in one fifth grade classroom, whose first year teacher, Cristina works with her mentor, Ann, who teaches the class next door, and a special education teacher, Julie, who plans and teaches with both of them.

> Students are working in groups, designing fire safety posters as part of a performance assessment for their health unit. John, Helen, Connie and Jeff use the first three minutes of their work time in a creative problem-solving process. Julie, John's inclusion teacher, sits with the group and asks them to think of ways to give John, their classmate with Down Syndrome, practice with his IEP goals — answering "what" questions, staying on task, and performing fine motor skills like tracing letters and pictures. She then asks the group to recap the last group project they did with John: the parts they thought went well and the parts they thought could have gone better.... After one minute of fact-finding, Julie asks the group to think of ideas to solve the problems they have identified. Julie writes down everything the group says: "Ask John questions"; "Give John time to answer"; "Give John choices"; "Take turns helping John while the rest of us work on project"; "Give John a buddy." After brainstorming for one minute, Julie reads out the ideas and asks the group to say which ones they think might help. After another one-minute discussion, Julie and the group pick their "best" solutions to try during the group's work on the fire-safety project.
>
> Only three minutes have elapsed since the class begin their group projects. John's group has a "game plan" to make the most of their allotted time.... John, Connie, Helen, and Jeff take a few more minutes to agree on major topics and details to include in their poster. They also decide who will be responsible for each part.

Helen is working with John today, and looks through a book with him to get ideas for illustrations for their poster. John says, "Let's draw a door with a peephole to see the fire." Helen makes a dotted-line door for John to trace. Helen then turns to Connie and discusses the fire-safety rules that will go beside the door. Helen writes the first two rules in yellow high-lighter so John can trace them. While John works on his tracing, Jeff illustrates another part of the poster; and Helen and Connie outline the next set of details. Helen periodically looks up from her work with Connie and encourages John. Connie and Jeff also look up from their work to encourage John and to give him opportunities to respond t o "what" questions: "What are you drawing?" "What color is that?" "What am I drawing?" Julie and Cristina are circulating through the classroom, giving help as needed. From time to time, Julie drifts back over to check on John and his group. This time she reminds John to take his time tracing and gives Helen a "thumbs up" for the good coaching she is giving John. Cristiana is recording individual grades for cooperative work skills as she circulates. Everyone in John's group gets highest marks today.

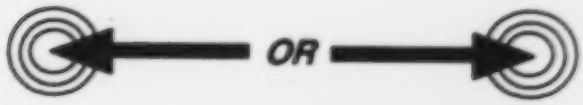
The kind of learning that builds community can only come by choice. School leaders can invite the kind of sustained dialogue necessary to clarify important guiding ideas, or they can simply issue a command: "As of now, this school is an inclusive community." Teachers can thoughtfully incorporate new tools into their practice as a way to develop their capabilities, or they can mindlessly run techniques, complain about their lack of magic effect, and proclaim inclusion a failure. School board members can guide a process of systems adaptation that will strengthen school community, or they can reactively impose an imported reform on their whole system.

Building community is creative work

One determinant of the scope and depth of person-to-person learning, and the effectiveness of adaptations to social architecture, is people's shared creativity. Ackoff (1991, p. 99) describes creativity as a three step process: 1) identify fundamental assumptions that: a) appear to be self-evidently true, and b) guide ordinary behavior, c) in ways that significantly reduce the range of available choices; 2) deny the validity of the identified assumptions; and, 3) explore the consequences of denying these assumptions.

Inclusion of students with substantial disabilities offers rich opportunities to surface and challenge some of the fundamental assumptions

whose obviousness to most people may constrain school effectiveness. The surest road to uncovering these fundamental assumptions begins with careful exploration of the conflicts that polarize people around the issue. This sort of conflict presents two key features: it is framed as an either/or choice and the assumptions that shape it contain strong emotions that pull people to one side of the conflict or another and stick them there. Here are three common conflicts that recur in efforts to create more inclusive school communities.



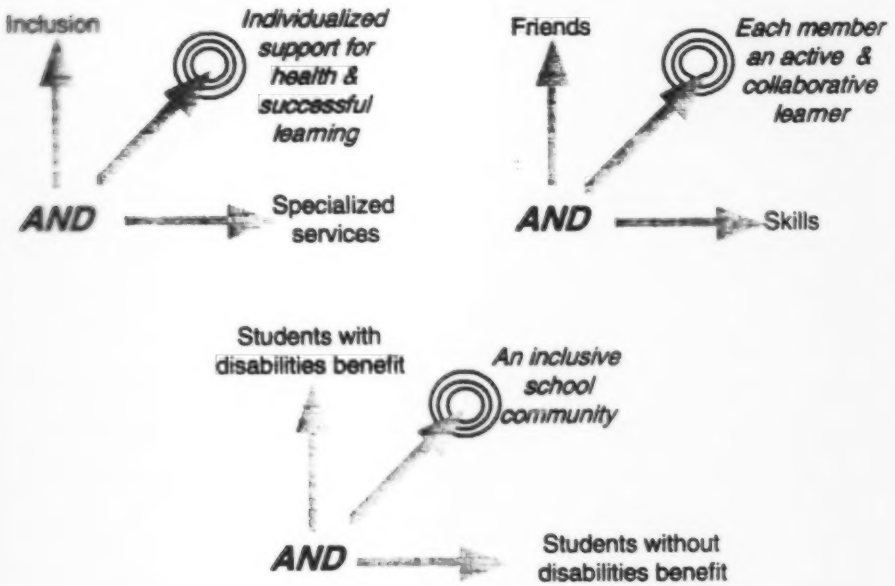
Inclusion	**OR**	Specialized services
Classroom activities that support social experiences and friendships.	**OR**	Classroom activities that support acquisition of academic or vocational skills
Students with disabilities benefit	**OR**	Students without disabilities benefit

The emotions attached to these conflicts often generate one of three responses that frustrate creativity and limit inclusion as a force for school renewal. People can try to ignore the conflict; or people can focus their energy on fighting those who hold the opposite pole, often appealing to outside allies such as unions or judges and thus shifting the conflict to more distant and familiar ground such as contract negotiations or adjudication of rights; or, if the first two responses fail, people can decide to compromise, that is, locate a point somewhere on the line between the poles that reflects the balance of power between the two groups.

A better response is to move into the conflict by carefully considering what is at stake and what the possibilities might be in the situation. A background assumption that locks these conflicts into place is that the only possible resolution is the outcome of a win/lose contest: if we have more of the kinds of classroom practices that support friendships, we must pay for this in declines in skills or academic attainment; if we have more inclusion we must have less of the specialized services students require; if we have greater benefits for students with disabilities, students without disabilities must suffer.

Gharajedaghi (1985) provides a useful conceptual tool to guide this work. He suggests denying the assumption that these win/lose trade-

offs are necessary conditions of inclusion by substituting "and" for "or" in the formulation of the conflict. Then placing the two desired goods at right angles to each other and defining a theme for development by considering what kind of shared action has the potential to integrate the contending poles. Dialogue about the way people involved in the conflict understand both of its poles is essential to crafting a theme for action that will organize peoples work. This theme is not a solution, but a common goal to which people in conflict can commit their energies and a direction to stimulate problem finding and problem solving. This figure depicts the move that reframes these conflicts as a direction for shared action.



Sarason (1990) appeals to this kind of thinking when he says that there is absolutely no way to reform schools without focusing in a sustained, thoughtful, and collective way on what he considers the fundamental question in schooling:

> "How can we liberate the human mind to use its capacities in ways that are productively expressive of those capacities at the same time that they strengthen a sense of community." (p.1).

Of course, scarcities of time and money influence these reframed conflicts; but, their effects act as only one constraint on how far and how fast it is possible to make progress on the identified theme. Moreover, there are significant limitations in what we know how to accomplish in schools; but themes for development point the way to problems worth solving and capabilities and systems worth developing.

Shifting attention from a win/lose contest between either inclusion or specialized services to an active search for ways to assure each child in a school individualized support for health and successful learning can lead people to explore ways to modify current boundaries, relationships, and structures to increase their capacity to work on their theme. They may reconsider the time and role demarcations that lead to the routine administration of specialized services in brief, separate, appointments between a therapist and a child or a small group of children, and take a collaborative approach to using their skills in concert with classroom teachers; this work will probably bring them some stress as they reconsider their beliefs about their separate professions (York, Giangreco, Vandercook, & Macdonald, 1992). They may explore ways that classroom or school activities with other students can be adapted to serve developmentally important purposes, as when one speech therapist decides that the interactions among children that occur during story time provides her with the best setting to work on improving a student's communication, or another shifts her priorities in order to assist a student to get better word recognition software for his lap top computer so that he can participate more independently in English class (O'Brien, C. 1994).

Some themes for development call for a new context. A classroom organized in straight rows to promote student-teacher relationships aimed narrowly at either individualistic pursuit of teacher controlled activities or competition to rank students from best to worst shrinks the space available for developing opportunities and supports almost to the vanishing point. A classroom in a school organized to promote cooperative learning and partner learning provides a powerful context for developing activities that can promote both positive social relationships and the practice, challenge, and support necessary for all students to develop relevant academic skills. This kind of school will be a demanding place to be an adult because each member of the school, including the teachers and the administrators and the custodians and the cafeteria workers, must accept personal responsibility for being an active and collaborative learner.

The perceived competition between children with substantial disabilities and children who are not disabled offers many possibilities for reflection. Indeed, the rest of this paper will explore this conflict: first, by surfacing two more assumptions at the source of the conflict that can deeply constrain the building of an inclusive school community; and, second, by taking an excursion into the philosophy of education by way of an old story about how people become human beings.

The notion that learning is a win/lose contest between groups of students divided by disability reflects the related assumptions that 1) students are best understood as either passive consumers of adult designed programs or non-compliant subverters of adult designed programs, and 2) schooling, controlled in all of its details by adults, is necessary and sufficient for education that develops human beings capable of full citizenship. These assumptions easily fit the guiding idea of the school as an education factory in which students are the raw materials transformed into willing workers and good citizens through standardized procedures. The factrory image conflicts with the guiding idea of school as a conscious community of learners, in which students can find personal models, disciplines, skills, and information which are necessary to their education, though not sufficient for it.

The experience of students and teachers engaged in the work of inclusion provides reasons to question both of these assumptions. Given the opportunity, students of all ages and diverse abilities demonstrate resourcefulness as collaborators in the design of, and active contributors to the creation of, classrooms and schools that work a little better for everyone. Students whose presence has been unthinkable because of their obvious disabilities can make as much of a contribution to building a community of active learners as anyone else can. Working together students and teachers and parents can create school communities that contribute more to everyone's education exactly because they openly engage some the real human difficulties and significant uncertainties that are frequently hidden under the busy order of school routine.

The messiness, the essential uncontrollability, the emotion, and the frequent darkness of the human issues at stake in education lead many adults to deny their presence, though one need only listen carefully to children in a reflective mood or read, reflectively, any of the clasics that educational fundamentalists believe should form the core of schooling to see that messiness, uncontrollability, emotion, and darkness are real in human children's experience, even if the children must keep them masked in order to contain the anxiety of the adults in their schools.

Students with substantial disabilities, as outsiders, can stir these human energies. Some students, teachers, and parents find that welcome, if difficult, lessons rise with these stirrings. Others react to their fear, and fight to maintain control by sanitizing the school room and cleansing it of significant differences. To work well with the messiness, the uncontrollability, the emotion, and the darkness stirred in many adults by the presence of a few children with substantial disabilities, people who want to make inclusive communities need to reflect on what education means, how it can be supported, and how it can be subverted. Stopping to reflect on what stories that are older than schooling might teach us about education offers one way to increase awareness, capability, and appreciation of purpose.

Education is the way of becoming a human being

Once, there was a powerful king whose beloved queen had died within days of giving birth to their long awaited son. The king loved his son fiercely and determined to do all that was necessary to prepare the prince to be a great king after him. He gave his son the finest coaches and tutors to strengthen and discipline his body and his reason. He gave his son loving attendants and playmates to share the palace with him. Most important of all, the king protected his son from the distractions and anxieties of contact with poverty, pain, and suffering.

The prince studied hard and played hard so that he would become a king worthy of his father's respect and love, and he grew straight and strong and smart, and more and more troubled by a growing anxiety that he knew too little of life. And so, he asked his riding coach, whom he loved and trusted, to take him to see how people lived outside the walls of the palace.

When the coach asked permission for the trip out, the king told the coach exactly what route and schedule to follow, and the king sent guards ahead to see to it that everything was cleaned on tidied and that the aged and the infirm and the poor were hidden from sight. "Make sure," he commanded, "that my son is edified only by the sight of those who are able and successful and handsome."

The prince and his coach had perfect weather for their trip, and everywhere the prince went he met healthy, happy, people. He was thinking to himself that he was foolish to be anxious about his knowledge of life, since everyone he met seemed much like himself. But suddenly a very old, ragged woman,

twisted with the burden of her years and confused by a cloud over her memory, tottered into the prince's path and shattered his complacency with her babbling.

The prince had never seen anything like this old woman and he demanded to know if this was indeed a person or if it were some other kind of creature. Reluctantly, the coach told the prince that he had glimpsed aging, which comes to all creatures, even to the king himself. Upset, the prince returned quickly to the palace and spent a sleepless night trying to assimilate this new experience.

The king was furious. Not only had the prince been troubled by the sight of aging, but the prince had resolved to take even more trips outside the palace walls to learn even more about life.

In the coming days, despite the frantic efforts of tutors and guards terrified into more and more careful preparation by the king's wrath, the prince met people who were poor, and people who were sick, and people who were broken by failure, and people who were mourninga friend's death. And, considering these troubling aspects of his humanity, the prince left his distraught father's palace to find his own life's path.

We sketch the story of Prince Siddhartha from his father's point of view because we feel within us, and we hear all around us, the urgency of adults who fervently want our children to grow up strong and able to take our places. Though we are not powerful kings and queens, we want to defend our children against anxiety and distraction from their growing up smart and happy, and we feel an urgency to build secure walls around their childhood in order to strengthen their bodies and focus their minds on the demands of adulthood. Because we do not live in palaces, but in a world where economic uncertainty, random violence, inexplicable diseases, and dangerous drugs undermine even our highest walls, our fervor easily turns to a frantic search for control of every detail of our children's contacts and routines. Because our children are not material princes and princesses, we fear that they will too soon face an adult world whose impersonal demands will overpower them and disappoint their dreams, and so we teeter between indulgence to compensate them for the hurt that will come and harshness to harden them to face it stolidly.

Siddhartha –whose story is much more richly told from his own point of view by Rafe Martin (1990)– followed his life's path out of the palace

walls and toward a world filled with pain and suffering, and thereby he traced out the lessons of Buddhism. The beginnings of his ancient story can speak to our predicaments in the education of children and young people.

No matter how we try to buffer them, our children face the human realities of poverty, sickness, disability, injustice, aging, and death. Indeed, they yearn to confront these realities so strongly that denial stunts their growth as human beings. Parental love and protection and provision of opportunity, discipline, information, and skills offer the young person some of the resources for transforming revulsion, fear, or morbid fascination into important knowledge. Young people, respectful of parental anxiety for their happiness and of parental desire that they live out parental plans, likely find the best way through these hard realities with the guidance of a trustworthy mentor, who truthfully responds to spoken and unspoken but real questions. Being a worthy mentor means courageously entering a conflict between the parent's desire to protect the child from difficulties by exercising control and the young person's desire to learn by directly engaging difficulties and exploring shadows. The journey of human growth may include periods of traveling alone, as Siddhartha's did, but his journey like every human journey begins and ends, and mostly it progresses, in and through personal relationships whose quality determines the depth of education.

Commands are futile as a way to better education

We raise these considerations because we believe that the voice of the king dominates most current debates over schooling in general and inclusion in particular. When politicians promise to discipline teachers so that schools will be as reliable and efficient and cleanly as microchip factories and as morally upright as Sunday school picnics, the king speaks loudly through them. When parents contest bitterly with one other to dominate school boards so that their children will be protected from the difficulties of accommodating people with diverse cultures, beliefs, and ideas, the king speaks loudly through them. When the president of a teachers union asserts that the rush toward full inclusion of children with disabilities is the contemporary trend that will have "the profoundest and most destructive effect on schooling" (Shanker, 1994), the king speaks loudly through him.

In each case, the king's command is the same, "Keep awful things away from my children: guard the gates, keep out what threatens, purge the enemies within our walls, and control every detail of daily life so that my children will grow up and take my place." In each case, the

king's command may be motivated by love and concern and could lead to his children having some of the resources they need to grow up well. In each case, the king's voice grows louder and louder because his commands become futile as his voice drowns out the other voices necessary to unfold the drama of human development.

Authoritatively demanding that schools assume responsibility for education that is both effective in real life and safe and sure because it controls all the details of children's lives is futile for at least five closely connected reasons.

First, the command contradicts itself, in that human growth requires both firm boundaries and challenges to boundaries, both safe time within walls and travel outside the walls. Our children cannot really take our places. The world that challenges them holds too many cultural, economic, political, and technological discontinuities with the world that shaped our parents. And, whether they should or not, many of our children don't easily accept the authority of adults as knowledgeable teachers of relevant matter.

Second, the command assigns too much of the wrong sort of responsibility to schools by preusming schooling equivalent to education. Much contemporary debate assumes that variations in standardized test scores reveal the educational results of public investment rather than simply being a quantitative check on some of the effects of schooling. While the king figures out new schemes to goad his administrators to drive up those test scores, the human work of education goes on, sometimes in school, sometimes at home, sometimes in libraries, and churches, and concert halls, and museums, and theaters, and civic associations, and ball fields, and workplaces, and sometimes on the streets between these vital places. Such is the hypnotic power of test results that these essential educational resources are not likely to figure in talk about schooling as part of an effort to orchestrate resources for children. Instead, school people seek to add them to the bill of indictment as co-defendants in the court of school deficiency, whose defects deserve a major share of blame for poor or declining scores.

Third, while no sensible person would allow a school to become an unwelcoming or a dangerous place, growing up as a human being in a complex and conflict-ridden world involves dealing with substantial risk from an early age. Pretending that those who come to school can be neatly divided into adults, who have finished their education, and children, who are progressing from one curricular stop to the next along a well charted path to adulthood, risks ignoring much of the experience of the real –sometimes deeply confused, hurt, and questing– people

who show up for school each day. The educational costs of leaving so much of human experience outside of the conscious life of schools are very deep.

Fourth, the dominance of commands and the fear of disobedience leads to peculiar distortions of truth that make everyday life in schools unnecessarily difficult. For example: despite what sensible people would allow, exhortation by political leaders to score better in service of the national and state interest does co-exist with the continuing provision of shoddy, unpleasant, and even dangerous school surroundings, most apparently to children struggling for an education in our poorest neighborhoods (Kozol, 1991). A second example: despite the widely held notion that our schools, once effective and safe for all, have deteriorated into ineffectiveness, there does not seem to have been a past in which all non-labeled children moved successfully through school. A school focused on preparation for some faces much different challenges than a school charged with assuring skilled performance by (almost) all. As recently as 80 years ago less than 10% of Americans had a high school diploma; today 85% do (Graham, 1992). A third example: the decade long, headlong rush to inclusion of students with severe disabilities, which is now destroying our schools, has seen only 5 of 100 children labeled mentally retarded, only 5 of 100 children labeled autistic, and only 6 of 100 children labeled multiply disabled take their full time places in regular classes (US Department of Education, 1994). Some headlong rush. Some destructive power. A fourth example: despite many expert proclamations that ordinary teachers can not, will not, will not be supported adequately to, and anyway should not manage a classroom that includes children with substantial disabilities a small but steadily growing number of teachers are, in fact, doing so (Rankin, Hallick, Ban, Hartley, Bost, & Uggla, 1994).

Fifth, the high volume of talk and activity around the reform of schooling might lead citizens to conclude that: a) there are highly effective methods for changing schools; and, b) classroom behavior has been changed repeatedly and radically as a result of high visibility educational reforms. That is, once the proper authority commands it, the means to implement change is at hand; so any failures of implementation are treasonous or subversive, and can be dealt with by punishing or replacing incompetent leaders. And any resulting failures to raise test scores are the direct result of previous reforms, thus justifying the firing of the last group of reformers and the hasty recruitment of new ones. Fullen (1993) reviewed research on systematic efforts to change schools and concludes that: 1) no reliable means of implementing mandated

school change exists; 2) even when administrators and teachers work systematically and with substantial extra resources to stimulate change they are far more likely to change structures or written curricula than they are to change actual classroom behavior. Sarason (1990) considers different studies and comes to similar conclusions, noting that the overall performance of schools continues to deteriorate relative to social expectations and that schools remain intractable to reform efforts. This combination of deteriorating performance and lack of effective change methods makes schools susceptible to fads which generate a great deal of activity, discussion, and sometimes heated disagreement around the school building but have very litfle effect on what happens in class-rooms.

Building inclusive community links schooling with education

Education leads children and adults out of comfortable routines and into the challenges and the pleasures of drawing on the lessons encoded in human tools and human texts to face life's realities. Education happens in company with others, and the gifts and fallibility's of other members of the company shape the extent and the texture of each member's growth. Schooling will offer people more resources for their education when adults and students collaborate to build conscious community to sustain the work of the school, even though this means growing past the myth of complete control of childhood. Students with substantial disabilities and their parents can liberate and organize much creativity in the school community. All that is required is the courage to renegotiate familiar boundaries, relationships, and structures and the constancy to learn the way through the difficulties that arise and the fidelity to renew the sense of community when it is threatened.

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